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Library Trustees Minutes 11-12-2003

Robbins Library Board of Trustees
November 12, 2003

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:15PM. Attending were trustees David Castiglioni, Patricia Deal, Katharine Fennelly, Barbara Muldoon, Frank Murphy, Joyce Radochia and Susan Ruderman. Also attending were library director Maryellen Loud and assistant director Cynthia Diminture.

Approval of Minutes

The corrected minutes of the October 21st meeting were approved on a motion by Ms. Fennelly; seconded by Ms. Radochia.

Communications

Ms. Loud told the Board that Page Lindsay's appearance before the Board had been rescheduled to the December meeting, due to staffing concerns at the Fox Branch Library. Ms. Lindsay is the library liaison to the Friends of Fox and will update the Board on the group's fundraising activities. Ms. Loud received a copy of a letter sent from the Metrowest Regional Library System to the Arlington Superintendent of Schools notifying her that the elementary schools have been eliminated from membership in the region due to lack of professional librarians in the schools. The major impact of this is denial of access to online databases provided by the Metrowest Region.

Director's Report

The September director's report was presented in a final version. The previous one was preliminary. The library's circulation has decreased for the first time in several years. This may be related to a decrease in hours open. There have been several equipment breakdowns recently, including the boiler and the digital duplicator. Ms. Loud told the trustees that there is a need for the circulating art print collection to be inventoried. Also, new purchases need to be made and several prints need re-framing. Ms. Fennelly made a motion; seconded by Ms. Ruderman, to expend \$1,000 for the purchase and re-framing of prints and \$600 for personnel costs to begin the collection inventory. These monies would be taken from the Robbins Print Fund. Passed unanimously. Ms. Ruderman suggested automating the catalogs for the print collection. Ms. Loud will explore this and report back at a future meeting.

Meeting Room Policy

Ms. Loud proposed several changes/updates to the meeting room policy, most having to do with hours of meeting room availability and the responsibility for set-up and break-down of the room. The trustees expressed acceptance of most of them. Ms. Loud will incorporate these into the existing policy and bring the revised document to the next meeting for approval.

Trustee Input on Food and Drink in the Meeting Room

Ms. Loud and Ms. Uttam (Children's Department) have had communications with patrons regarding the consumption of nut products in the library, as well as discussions about the broader topics of food allergies and allowing any type of food during library sponsored children's programs. After much discussion and advice from Town Counsel, the majority of the Board believed that the library should discourage food consumption during library programs due to its potential for distracting attendees from the programs. A sign will be posted asking for the cooperation of parents in refraining from bringing any nut products into the library, in consideration of those with serious food allergies.

Use of E-Mail

Mr. Murphy asked the town counsel for a ruling on the use of e-mail as a means of communication among Board members. He received and distributed copies of the District Attorney's opinion that e-mail communication has potential for violations of the open meeting law and should therefore be discouraged. Brief E-mail transmissions should only be used for purposes such as notification of changes in meeting times or other housekeeping matters.

Service Priorities and FY05 Budget

Ms. Loud distributed several spreadsheets regarding hours, circulation and staffing for review and discussion. She also reviewed the FY05 Expense and Personnel budget requests that will be submitted within constraints of level funding. Ms. Loud discussed the need to establish service priorities for FY05 in view of level funding or further budget cuts. The Board will discuss this further at a future meeting. Proposed departmental budgets are due to the Manager's Office next Friday, November 21st.

Outline of Annual Report

The annual report for inclusion in the town's report will follow the same format as last year. The format of the departmental report to be given to the public was discussed. Ms. Loud will prepare some formats for review by the trustees.

Author Program

The program featuring Sue Miller was highly successful, with over one hundred people in attendance. There were many favorable comments on the evening. It is time to select an author for the spring program and Ms. Deal asked board members to bring suggestions to the next meeting.

Anniversary Celebration

Ms. Radochia and Ms. Fennelly have scheduled a meeting with Ms. Loud to discuss ideas for next year's celebration of the 10th anniversary of the building renovation/addition. Library department heads will have a chance to provide input. The full board will discuss these at the next meeting.

Timeline for Trustee Projects

Mr. Murphy volunteered to work on the support of the Friends of the Library. Ms. Ruderman will work on developing a long-range fundraising plan.

Other

Ms. Fennelly reported that the League of Women Voters is in the process of revising its positions regarding the library that were determined after a study undertaken in the 1980s. Next Tuesday, November 18th, they will meet to discuss this topic.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 PM on a motion by Ms. Deal; seconded by Ms. Fennelly. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 9th at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Diminture